Gc
975.601
R78o

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1833 02293 8952

Gc
975.601
R78o
2244436

REYNOLDS HISTORICAL
GENEALOGY COLLECTION

Christ Church

Rowan County

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH

Prepared by
REV. ROBERT B. OWENS
Rector of the
Church of the Holy Comforter
Charlotte, N. C.

Allen County Public Library
Ft. Wayne, Indiana

2244436

Foreword

THIS HISTORICAL SKETCH of Christ Church was prepared in response to the request of members of the congregation, and read at the Centennial celebration. It makes no claim to originality. It is little more than a compilation of materials that have been gathered by other hands, but are inaccessible to most who will read this. I have quoted freely from Hon. John S. Henderson's article on "Episcopacy" in Rumple's History of Rowan county; from Bishop Cheshire's article on "Parson Miller" in "Church History in North Carolina;" from "The Book of Remembrance of St. Luke's Parish" written by Rev. Francis J. Murdoch, and still in manuscript; from Dr. Murdoch's copy of the old "Parish Record and Vestry Book" of Christ Church, made by him before the original was destroyed by fire; from the file of "Journals of the Diocese," beginning with the first convention of Tarboro, 1794; and from various other sources. I have used quotation marks only when they would seem to add interest to the item quoted, and I feel sure that if those whose materials have been thus used could have been consulted, they would raise no objection. If the reader finds anything in this sketch that is thus quoted without credit, let him remember that such credit is **freely** given here.

ROBERT B. OWENS.

Charlotte, N. C., Monday in Easter Week, 1921.

Christ Episcopal Church
Cleveland, Rowan County
North Carolina 27013
The Rev. Claude A. Collins
Rector
Church 704-278-4652
Rectory 704-278-4249

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016

https://archive.org/details/christchurchrowa00owen_0

Christ Church

Rowan County

CHRIST CHURCH, Rowan County, was admitted into union with the Diocesan Convention Saturday, April 28, 1821. But the congregation was organized some years prior to that date, and the history of its beginnings reaches back further still into the last half of the 18th century, to a period antedating the Revolutionary War.

It should be borne in mind that before that war, the Province of North Carolina was under the control of the King of England, and that English laws and customs prevailed. The English Church was the "Established religion," of the Province as it was of the mother country. But the people were accustomed to an established church, and it caused but little restlessness. All denominations during the seventeenth and most of the eighteenth centuries believed that some form of Christianity should be established by law as the Church of the State; and as this was an English province and more than half of its citizens adherents of the English Church; and as the "establishment" was administered in the broadest spirit of tolerance and charity, but little objection was made.

But while England "established" the Church here, she did little else for it. Very little effort was made to give the people religious privileges in the Colonies. Such few ministers as came were, for the most part, missionaries sent out by the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel," a missionary society of the Church of England, and were supported, not by the State, but by that Society. The Bishop of London was the nominal head of the Church in America, but he lived 3,000 miles away and never thought of visiting his distant charge. No Conventions could be held, no Bishops were allowed, and there could be neither organization, confirmations, or ordinations. Candidates for the ministry were obliged to go to London for ordination,—a journey both costly, and so hazardous that it is said that one-fifth of all who set out returned no more. It was an "Episcopal" church without an "Episcopus,"—a body without a head.

The non-episcopal denominations were, because of their different polity, in much more fortunate condition. They could hold their conventions and associations, and could set apart their ministers on the spot, and whereever they chose, and so they grew, while the established church languished; and this growth was, to some extent at least, at the expense of the established church. Adherents of that Church, being deprived of the ministrations of

their own Church, were compelled to make use of the ministrations of the denominational preachers, and it is not to be wondered at if after awhile many of them united with the churches in their vicinity.

I have spoken of these difficulties in order that the faithfulness of the pioneer church people of Rowan may stand out in contrast. They had the **same** difficulties and discouragements, but most of them remained faithful to the church of their fathers, and this fidelity resulted ultimately in the organization of this Church.

Christ's Church, though older than St. Luke's was originally a part of St. Luke's Parish. Rowan County and St. Luke's Parish were formed at the same time in 1753, and their boundaries were coterminous. They included all that vast territory south of Virginia; west of the eastern boundaries of Randolph, Guilford, and Rockingham; and north of the Southern boundaries of Rowan and Iredell, crossing the Catawba river near Beatty's ford, through Lincoln, Cleveland, Rutherford, Buncombe, Haywood, Jackson, Macon, and Cherokee, and on west indefinitely to the Pacific Ocean. St. Luke's Parish included the territory occupied today by more than thirty counties in North Carolina, besides that indefinite territory outside the present bounds of the state.

It is of course impossible to estimate the number of adherents of the church in the parish at that time, but there were unquestionably a large number. Nearly all the English people and their descendants, as well as the Welch, and many of the Irish were Episcopalians. Hon. John S. Henderson gives the following names of persons living here before the Revolution, as probably Episcopalians: Frohock, Giles, Locke, Chambers, Macay, Dunn, Coles, Boote, Carter, Foster, Churton, Steele, Little, Martin, Rutherford, Pearson, Dobbin, Craige, Brandon, and others.

I have been unable to find any record of ministrations of the church in St. Luke's Parish before the year 1769,—except a single reference in a letter of Dr. Draige to a visit made by "Mr. Cuppels" and baptisms administered by him. In any case, the Parish had no settled Rector before that date. Williamson in his history of North Carolina gives an "Extract from a petition from sundry inhabitants of Rowan County" to Governor Tryon, in which they complain that "Those who adhere to the liturgy and profess the doctrines of the Church of England as by law established have not had the privileges and advantages which the rubrics and canons of the church allow and enjoin on all her members; that the acts of the Assembly calculated to framing a regular vestry in all the counties have never in this county produced their happy fruits; that the county of Rowan lies under great disadvantages, as her inhabitants are composed of almost all nations

of Europe, and instead of uniformity in doctrine and worship, they have a medley of most of the religious tenets that have lately appeared in the world; who from dread of submitting to the national church should a lawful vestry be established, elect such of their own community as evade the acts of the Assembly and refuse the oaths, whence we can never expect the regular enlivening beams of the gospel." This petition was signed by thirty-four persons some of whom "made their mark."

Because of this petition, or for some other reason, Governor Tryon sent Rev. Theodorus Swain Draige to minister to St Luke's Parish for a few months. If he gave satisfaction, he was to be inducted into the Parish. He began his work in Salisbury December 20, 1769, and in a letter to Governor Tryon dated March, 1770, he said "That there was no qualified vestry in the Parish, but that it was proposed to elect one the following Easter monday." Under the law, the vestry was elected by the "Freeholders" and as the dissenting freeholders outnumbered those who were churchmen, they elected a vestry of "dissenters" who refused to qualify, hoping thus to avoid the expense of supporting a clergyman and building a church. The churchmen, however, elected a second vestry who petitioned the governor to induct Dr. Draige, which he accordingly did. They also petitioned him for an act of Assembly appointing twelve men, whom they named, as vestrymen, until a law could be passed which would put it out of the power of the dissenters to prevent the choice of a lawful vestry.

In 1771 Dr. Draige wrote the S. P. G. that "There were, he thought in his parish 900 families of churchmen; that he had established 40 congregations, and baptized 802 persons; that 'Mr. Cuppels' had baptized many on a tour before he (Mr. D.) came; that the parish was 180 miles long and 120 broad; that owing to having no vestry, he had received no salary and but few fees, and had to live at his own expense, and could not for that reason send for his family."

Governor Tryon left the colony in 1771, and Dr. Draige left in 1775. Rev. R. J. Miller, in a letter, said that "After four years of fruitless effort to organize an Episcopal congregation in this section, he left it as he found it, without any."

Soon after his departure came the Revolutionary War, which had a most disastrous effect on the Episcopal congregations of the state. Most of the clergymen were Englishmen by birth and sympathy, and being deprived of their support, and smarting under the unpopularity of all things English, went back to England. Four or five of them however, remained, but it is doubtful if any of them ever came as far west as Salisbury. The Churchmen of Rowan were left as sheep without a shepherd, and in this state of

spiritual destitution they remained for more than a quarter of a century, with no minister to marry them, baptize their children, minister to them the Bread of life, or bury their dead. That they remained faithful to their church under such trying conditions speaks volumes for their early training and their love for the Church.

About the year 1794 there took place an event which later on made the organization of Christ Church possible. In that year a considerable colony of church people emigrated from St. Mary's county, Maryland, and settled a large tract of country extending roughly over a radius of about ten miles from Young's mountain. The ancestors of some of these colonists had emigrated from England with Lord Baltimore's colony about the year 1655, when Cromwell was at the zenith of his power, and the Puritans in control. Cromwell, toward the end of his career became a thoroughgoing puritan; and a loyal churchman did not lead an easy life under his regime. "One disability after another was laid on Churchmen." They were forbidden the use of their Prayer Book, "In 1655, severer measures were proclaimed by Cromwell against Catholicism and Episcopacy. Priests were banished, and Anglican clergymen commanded to refrain from public ministrations." Dr. Luke Barber, and others emigrated to Maryland in 1655, two years before the death of Cromwell, and a year before the government had granted "Religious toleration, but so that this liberty be not extended to popery or prelacy." The emigrant Churchmen found a much greater liberty of conscience under the Roman Catholic Calvert, than they did under the puritan Cromwell, and in Maryland they and their descendants were free to enjoy the services of their own beloved church without let or hindrance.

It is supposed that when General Green and his army passed through this section during the Revolutionary War, among his troops were descendants of these early Maryland colonists, who after the war was ended remembered "that good land" through which they had passed, and loading their household goods into wagons and carts,—the only means of transportation in that early day—made their slow and toilsome way over rough roads to their future home. Among those who came were the Barbers, Chunns, Garners, Harrisons, Alexanders, Lightells, Mills, Reeves, Burroughs, Dents, and others; all neighbors, and most of them related by ties of blood or marriage.

One of those who came was Rev. Hatch Dent (Parson Dent), a clergyman of the Church, who settled on Withrows creek near the small mountain that now bears his name. Unfortunately for the welfare of the Church, he remained only a short time, soon

returning to Maryland where he died. Had he remained, and his life been spared, this church might have been organized sooner.

Another of these emigrants deserves mention because of her influence in holding the pioneers faithful to their Church. Elizabeth Wainwright, and her sister Susan, were born near the mouth of the Thames, in England, and emigrated to Maryland about the time of the Revolution, where they were married,—Elizabeth, to Elias Barber, and Susan, to Thomas Chunn. They came to Rowan with the other colonists in 1794, and were a tremendous power in their church. Of Elizabeth it is said "She was the central figure in the church life of the parish and was instrumental in holding the church members together when they had no minister." Judge Ruffin once remarked "A characteristic feature of that colony was their firm and unwavering adherence to church principles in the face of discouragements and lack of opportunity" and to her grandson, Rev. R. W. Barber, he said "This devotion to church principles was the result of your grandmother's influence. I always called her the presiding Bishop of Rowan county." Dr. Murdoch said of her "She was one of the most remarkable women who have graced the history of the Church in North Carolina."

It is impossible to say just when services were begun. Tradition tells of a log church (more likely school house) built near the spot on which we now stand (it was about 25 feet northwest of the present church). This was built, presumably by neighborhood cooperation, on land owned by the Barbers, and was used in common by preachers of all denominations. Persons now living distinctly recall seeing the foundation stones and the lower logs of this building before they were finally removed. It is probable that this location was chosen because of its proximity to the splendid spring which lies just at the foot of the hill. It was in this log building that Christ Church was organized, about 1817, by Rev. Robert Johnstone Miller, who became its first Rector.

"Parson Miller" as he was called, was a man of such great and lasting influence, and his history so unique, that he deserves more than a passing mention. He was born in Scotland, and brought up in the Episcopal Church under Bishop Raitt, of Brechin. He emigrated to Virginia when about 15 years of age, probably before the Revolutionary War. About 1784 he connected himself with the Methodists, who at that time were a society in the Church of England. (John Wesley died in 1791, a priest in full communion with the Church, and the Methodists did not separate until after his death.) In uniting with them when he did, Mr. Miller was not leaving the Church, but merely joining a society in the Church. In a letter he said "They repudiated the charge that they intended separation from the Church. The clergy of the Church were their

acknowledged leaders, and though they permitted unordained men to preach, they made a distinction between these "Preachers" and regular "Ministers." Mr. Miller went with Dr. Coke to a "Conference" held in Franklin county, N. C., and during the year 1785 preached in the "Tar River Circuit," but coming to the conclusion that the Methodists were departing from the Church, he withdrew from them, and settled on the west bank of the Catawba river, at "White Haven" near what is now Lowesville, in Lincoln county. The people of that community had emigrated from Pennsylvania and Virginia, and were a mixture of English, German, Scotch, and Irish. Having no minister, they persuaded Mr. Miller to take charge of them as a lay reader, hold services for them, instruct their children, and bury their dead. Both he and they mutually agreed to adhere to the Episcopal Church. They had only a few English Prayer Books, and two of the first American edition, which Mr. Miller had secured, and could obtain no more. But the congregation was organized, wardens and vestry appointed, and an act of incorporation secured from the General Assembly.

Not being an ordained minister, his congregation had to depend on the neighboring Lutheran minister for the sacraments. Mr. Miller was urged by the Lutheran ministers, with whom he was on intimate terms, to accept ordination at their hands. Several Presbyterian ministers, who were also his intimate friends, advised the same course. His congregation joined in the plea, assuring him that they would be perfectly satisfied with his ministrations. After long hesitation, and the possibility of securing ordination at the hands of a Bishop being very remote, he at last rather reluctantly consented; with the express stipulation, however, that he receive ordination, not as a Lutheran, but as an Episcopalian; and reserving for himself and his congregation the right to "Unite in full communion with the Episcopal Church whenever it should please God to revive her in the state." He was accordingly ordained in St. John's Lutheran Church, Cabarrus county, May 20, 1794, and the letter of orders given him reads in part as follows:

"To all whom it may concern, greetings:

Whereas a number of people in Lincoln county have formed themselves into a society by the name of White Haven Church, and also have formed a vestry; we, the subscribers, having been urged by the pressing call from the said Church to ordain a minister for the good of their children, and for ye enjoyment of the Gospel ordinances among them from us the ministers of the Lutheran Church in North Carolina—(Here much of the certificate is torn away and lost)—according to ye infallible word of God, administer ye sacraments, and to have ye care of souls; he always being

obliged to obey ye rules, ordinances and customs of ye christian society called ye Episcopal Church in America.

Given under our hands and seals. North Carolina, Cabarrus County, May 20th, 1794.

Signed:

Adolphus Nussman, Sr.,
Johann Gottfried Arendt,
Arnold Roschen,
Christopher Bernhardt,
Charles Storch."

Mr. Miller seems to have gone at once from his ordination to a meeting of the Episcopal Convention in Tarboro. At this Convention he took his place as one of the Clergy, reading morning prayer on the second day. He was chosen a clerical member of the Standing Committee, voted with the clergy for a Bishop, and as one of the clergy signed the testimonial of election of Bishop-elect Pettigrew. In a letter written to Rev. Adam Empie in 1814 he says "I was also acknowledged and received as such (i. e. a minister) by the Convention of the Episcopal clergy of this state while it had any being." But wherever he refers to the subject it appears that Mr. Miller was always extremely doubtful of the propriety of his ordination, and excused it on the ground of apparent necessity.

He was a man of indefatigable industry, serving not only the people of Smyrna and White Haven, but making long missionary tours through the entire western part of the state, and even into Virginia, Tennessee, and South Carolina, being away from home months at a time, preaching, baptising, and ministering in every way to the spiritual needs of the scattered and spiritually destitute pioneers. In 1803, he attended a Luthern Synod in Salisbury, where he drew up for them a Constitution adapted from the general Constitution of the Episcopal Church, under which he continued in union with them until 1818. Mr. Miller says that Christ Church was organized as a congregation during his connection with the Lutheran Synod (i. e. before 1818.)

Some years ago, the late Rev. Francis J. Murdoch laboriously copied the old Records of Christ Church. It is an exceedingly fortunate thing that he did so, for the originals have since been destroyed by fire, and the only copy in existence is that made by him, and now in possession of his widow. From this book I copy:

"Oldest Record of a communion. 3d Communion——1818, William Cowan & Ann his wife, John Turner, Wilson Turner, Martin Harky, William Barber & Margaret his wife, Richard Barber, Charles Swann & Mary his wife."

Another most interesting record is the oldest record of a confirmation in this church: "2d Confirmation, Sunday, April 16, 1820. Richard Swann, Wilson Turner, James Owens, John Turner, Saml. Turner, Joseph Turner, William Heathman, Elizabeth Heatman, Sarah Dent, Dorcas Dent, Providence Heathman, Lucilia Turner, Drake Randleman, Jane Cowan, Mary Barrier, Charles Barrier, Robert Chunn, James Davis, Matilda Davis, Luke Barber & Nancy his wife; John Barber & Catherine his wife," twenty-four in all. The interesting point about this confirmation is its date, 1820. As this was some years before Christ Church ever saw a Bishop, these persons were confirmed by Parson Miller, by virtue of his ordination by Lutheran ministers. At Bishop Ravenscroft's first visit in 1823, he confirmed a class of 50. It is very probable that among these were many, possibly all, of those who had previously received confirmation at the hands of Parson Miller.

The "Sixth Communion" was held about the time the Church was admitted into union with the Convention in 1821 and the names of the communicants will be of special interest as indicating the personnel of the membership at that time. There were fifty-eight who received at this communion and their names were: Thomas Chunn and Susan his wife; John Goodman and Margaret his wife; Chatrin Fillhour, W. Chunn, Mary Chunn, Benj. Lightell and Ann his wife; William Barber and Margaret his wife; William Cowan and Ann his wife; Owen Harrison and Sarah his wife; James Alexander and Mary his wife; Elizabeth Alexander, James Alexander, Sophia Poston, Louisa Lightell, Benj. Harrison and Anna his wife; Johnathan Barber and Elizabeth his wife; Nancy Young, Elizabeth King, Geo. Barringer, Bennett A. Reeves, Sam'l. Turner and Elizabeth his wife; John Turner, James Thiney, Anna Lewis, Elizabeth Barber, Nancy Barber, Margaret Barber, Catherine Neely, Ann Barber, John Swann and Sarah his wife; Charles Swann, John Cowan and Mary his wife; Almand Hall, Wilson Turner, John Turner and Millicent his wife; Ann Dent, Celia Griffith, Sam'l. Turner and Elizabeth his wife, Elizabeth Garner, Sarah Garner, Wilson Turner, Jr., Richard Swann and Catherine his wife.

The Convention of the Diocese met in Raleigh, April 28, 1821. Bishop Moore, of Virginia, was present and presided. The sessions were held in the Supreme Court room. There were present six clergymen and delegates from five Parishes. "Rev. Robert J. Miller of Burke county came in the capacity of a delegate from the German and English Lutheran Synod of North Carolina, and for the purpose of effecting as far as practicable, intercourse and union between the Episcopal Church, and some of the Lutheran congregations. 'Resolved that Rev. Mr. Miller be cordially re-

ceived in the above capacity and admitted to a seat in the Convention.'"

"The congregation of Christ Church, Rowan county was formally admitted into union with the Convention, and their delegate, Almand Hall, was admitted to a seat."

On May 1st, "Rev. Robert Johnstone Miller was admitted to the order of Deacons, and in the evening of the same day was advanced to the order of Priests."

This ordination took place in the Methodist Church, as the Episcopalians had no church in Raleigh. And so, at last, the fond wish of the pious old servant of God was fulfilled, and he was privileged to minister as a regularly ordained Priest in the Church in which he had been born, and from which his affections had never strayed. This seems to have been the first opportunity he had ever had, and he instantly avails himself of it, to seek his commission from a successor of the Apostles.

Parson Miller was held in greatest affection and esteem by all who knew him, "A truly pious and sincere Christian, and instrumental in larger degree than any other one person in keeping alive the knowledge of the Episcopal Church in the western part of the state." "Christ's Church; St. Michaels, Iredell county; St. Peter's, Lexington; White Haven, Smyrna, and St. Peter's, Lincoln county; and St. Luke's, Salisbury, all represent the work of Parson Miller in a region which never had a minister of the Church until after 1817, but where the people steadfastly held to the Church principles inherited from their fathers. In the Convention at Salisbury (1823), he stood with the same little congregations—the only ones outside of Edenton, Newbern, and Wilmington, that had preserved their continuity from the time of the Tarboro Convention of 1794 until the successful organization of the Diocese in 1817. In 1794, he and the lay representative had voted for Mr. Pettigrew; in 1823 they came again and voted for Bishop Ravenscroft. He is the only man who was in both Conventions. He is the link between the Convention in Tarboro, 1794, and the present Diocese of North Carolina."

The lay delegates from Christ Church to the Convention that elected Rishop Ravenscroft, were John Cowan, Benj. Lightell, and Samuel Fleming; and Mr. Miller was acting as chairman of the Convention at the moment when the election was announced.

Shortly before his ordination in 1821, he had removed to Burke county where he spent his remaining days until his death in the summer of 1834. Though he lived 75 miles away, and in spite of the discomforts of travel on horseback, he did not forget his scattered flocks in Rowan and Iredell but continued to make periodical visits to them as his strength and time would permit. But

occasional services such as he was able to give, while they might hold his congregation together, could not result in vigorous growth. In 1826, Bishop Ravenscroft says in his journal "For some years past, St. Luke's and Christ Church have been altogether dependent on occasional and uncertain services, the injurious consequences of which were beginning to be visible. As however there could be no doubt of their joint ability to maintain a clergyman, and it was hoped the inclination was not wanting, my main object was to bring them to act with union and effect for this so essential a purpose." That he succeeded is evidenced by an old record of the Christ Church vestry. "November 12, 1825, 'At a meeting of the vestry of Christ Church convened on due notice to consider the means of employing and maintaining a clergyman for the ensuing year in connection with St. Luke's Salisbury, it is agreed and resolved that we will raise and pay the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars in half yearly installments in order to support a clergyman for the year 1826 to preach two Sundays in the month.'" William Swann and Almand Hall were appointed a committee to meet the committee of St. Luke's vestry, make all necessary arrangements, and extend a call to the Rev. Thomas Wright, of Wadesborough. The call was accepted by Mr. Wright, with the stipulation that he be permitted to reserve all fifth Sundays for his former charge at Wadesborough. This was agreed to, and he took charge January 1, 1826.

It was during his rectorate that the present church was built. The deed for the land is dated February 15, 1822; signed by Elias Barber, John E. Barber, and Luke Barber; and witnessed by Elias Pubue (?) and Benj. Lightell. The records of the vestry have the following entry: "March 5, 1826. The congregation of this church appointed Richard W. Barber, John D. Swann, and Benj. Lightell a committee to direct the building of the church." In his report to the Convention that year Mr. Wright says, "The brethren of Christ Church in general are of one mind and one spirit, and walking themselves in the old paths and the good way, will induce others to follow in their steps. They have recently raised the frame of a new building 60 by 40 which will soon be enclosed, and probably ready for the celebration of Divine services in October or November next." August 5, 1826, it was "Resolved by the wardens and vestry that the making of the floors, the putting up of the pulpit, and the doing of the ceiling and of the walls as high as the pews, making the window sashes, glazing the same in workmanlike manner be put up by the building committee to the lowest bidder. N. B.: It is understood that should there not be money enough to pay for all the work mentioned above, then the building committee shall sell out so much of it as they can pay for."

I have been unable to learn the name of the contractor, but in any case he did honest work. The timbers were hewn out by hand and all exposed parts planed down to a smooth surface by hand. The marks of the axe used in hewing can be plainly seen in the pillars supporting the gallery. The church was built with a gallery to accommodate the considerable number of slaves who were members of this church. In nearly every record of confirmations of the early days, after the names of white persons confirmed are given the names _____ _____ slaves of _____ _____. The same is true of the records of communions, and this continued until the Civil War, after which the colored communicants drifted away to denominational churches of their own race. In not making adequate provision for them after the war, the church lost a splendid opportunity, for there is that in the stately and dignified liturgy of the Episcopal Church that appeals to the negro when rightly presented to him, and these colored communicants **might** have been saved to the Church.

But to return; in the record of the vestry meeting June 2, 1827, is an item that reveals an interesting fact in connection with the history of this church, "Resolved that until next Easter, the pews be granted free to all who have subscribed $5.00 each to the new church, all other pews to be rented to the highest bidder" and on July 27, 1827, "Resolved that the pews in the new church be rented to the highest bidder until next Easter in order to raise the salary for the minister; the subscriptions already made to be deducted from the price of the pew purchased by any individual." I never knew until I read this record that the members of this church had enjoyed the aristocratic luxury of rented pews!

The church, though not completed, was consecrated by Bishop Ravenscroft, July 29, 1827. He was assisted by Rev. Mr. Miller, Rev. Wm. Mercer Green (afterwards Bishop of Mississippi) and the Rector, Rev. Mr. Wright. The Bishop says, "The building is plain but convenient, and adds much to the comfort of this large body of worshipers, the second in number of communicants in the Diocese." He also says that he "Catechised the children who did credit to their instructors."

There is another matter that should be mentioned at this point, i. e., the fact that there are two cemeteries, and why. In discussing the matter of the location of the cemetery, a strong difference of opinion arose in the congregation, and especially between Mr. Elias Barber, and Mr. Thomas Chunn, who were brothers-in-law. Mr. Chunn thought that the cemetery should be on the east side of the church on account of the spring. Mr. Barber for the same reason thought it ought to be on the west side. Mr. Chunn died first, and was buried on the east side (about 1822, as

the last record concerning him is that he made his communion on the fourth Sunday in May of that year). Soon afterward, one of Mr. Barber's children died and was buried on the west side, and from this beginning, the two cemeteries grew. One or both of them was right, for the spring was ruined, and is no longer used.

Another point that should be mentioned is that when the church was built, no provision was made for heating it. The stoves now in use are the original stoves placed in the church, and they were purchased within the memory of persons now living. The pioneers of that early day were of that sturdy fibre that could worship God on the coldest day in a church that had never known a heating plant.

In his address to the Convention of 1832, Bishop Ives says: "This congregation as to its spiritual state seems to be prosperous. It would, however, afford me great pleasure on my next visitation to find that they had finished their commodious church, and added a vestry room, which from the secluded situation, is very much needed." This was not done, however, for it was not until August, 1836, that "William Chunn, Richard W. Barber, and David Cowan, were appointed a committee to finish the church," which it is presumed they did. But the vestry room was not built until many years later, while Dr. Wetmore was Rector.

Rev. Mr. Wright was born in New York, but removed to Wilmington as a young merchant. It is said that on a sea voyage, the ship on which he was a passenger was wrecked, and he barely escaped with his life. This experience completely changed his life, and after a period of preparation he took holy orders, and settled in Wadesboro, from whence he came to St. Luke's and Christ Church, removing in 1832 to La Grange, and later to Memphis, Tenn., where he did a splendid work until his death during the great cholera epidemic of 1853. It is said that only ten communicants of his church in Memphis remained alive after the epidemic.

He was succeeded at Christ Church by Rev. John Morgan, who was born in London, but educated in America. He took charge of the church the latter part of 1833 or the beginning of 1834, and left July, 1836. I note the confirmation of a class of 30 persons presented by him. In addition to his charges in Rowan, he also served Charlotte and Lincolnton every fifth week, making the long trips through the country probably on horseback. He is said to have been a great traveller, a man of learning, a good preacher, amiable, exceedingly generous, but eccentric and unpractical. He inherited a fortune of $30,000, which was soon spent—mostly for books and in travel—and given away. It is told of him that he

once gave his overcoat to a man who was shivering in the cold, and rode home himself without one.

The next Rector was Rev. Thomas F. Davis, who came in 1836 and remained until 1846, when he removed to Camden, S. C., due, it is said, to his increasing dissatisfaction with the vagaries of Bishop Ives. In 1853 he was elected Bishop of South Carolina, and consecrated at the same time as Bishop Atkinson. During his rectorate here, the church made good progress. In 1853 Bishop Ives' address contained the following reference to Christ Church: "This is one of the most numerous and in some respects interesting parishes in the Diocese, embracing as it does the bulk of the people, and among them a large proportion of highly respectable and independent farmers who seem desirous of securing for themselves and their children the full benefits of the Gospel of the Covenant in providing an ample support for their devoted pastor." In 1840 he said: "I notice with pleasure the manifest and distinguishing zeal of the parents in training their children in the catechism. The morning appointed for the examination was stormy and the children were scattered over a parish of some miles in extent. Still the attendance was good, and what is better, the answers to the questions gave convincing proof that their zeal in coming was kindled by a sense of their spiritual advantages. Seldom have I witnessed a more gratifying examination."

In 1840 Mr. Davis reports 100 communicants, "about 20 of whom will soon withdraw to form St. Andrew's Church." St. Andrews was consecrated in August of that year.

Hon. John S. Henderson says of Mr. Davis: "He was a wise Bishop, a true Christian, a great divine, and a sincere, pure, good man."

During the latter part of his rectorate, he was assisted by Rev. Charles Bruce Walker, Deacon, to whom the work at Christ Church seems, for the most part to have been entrusted, Mr. Davis coming to administer the communion. On August 24, 1844, Mr. Walker was ordained priest in this church by Bishop Ives. One year later he accepted work at Edgefield, S. C.

In 1846 Rev. John Haywood Parker, who had become Rector of St. Luke's, ministered to this congregation, and in 1848 Rev. Oliver Sherman Prescott, Deacon, became his assistant. Mr. Prescott was here only a short time, leaving to take work in the North. He worked for a while at the Church of the Advent, Boston, and later in the slums of London, where he was assisted by Mrs. Wm. E. Gladstone, the wife of the noted Prime Minister of England. Returning to the United States, he ministered in Philadelphia, Wisconsin, then in New York. It is said that "he was easily first of the clergy of this country who espoused the cause of the revival of

religion in what is known as the Oxford movement. His teaching was characterized by simplicity and deep spirituality."

He was succeeded by Rev. James Gilbert Jacocks, who was ordained Deacon and priest in 1850, and placed in charge of St. Philips, Mocksville, and the neighboring churches, Christ Church among them. Mr. Jacocks remained until 1855, when he removed to Tennessee. He was not a very good preacher, but the records of the church give evidence of faithful and efficient service on his part. He was especially fond of children and they of him. The older people of the parish remember him with pleasure, and his leaving was a matter of general regret. He never married, had few near friends, and when he died, left his entire estate, valued at about $15,000, to the various charities of his church.

It was during his incumbency that this church gave her first son to the ministry. On Sunday after Ascension, May 12, 1850, Richard Wainwright Barber was ordered Deacon by Bishop Ives, and in 1852 advanced to the priesthood by the same Bishop. Mr. Barber was a son of William Barber, for many years a warden and lay Reader of the church, and one of its most prominent men. His grandparents were Elias and Elizabeth Wainwright Barber, two of the original emigrants from Maryland. He was educated, partly in his native county and partly at Valle Crucis. After his ordination, he served two years at Plymouth, N. C., but finding it necessary to leave the malarial climate of eastern Carolina, he removed to Wilkesboro, becoming the second Rector of that church, a post he held until failing health obliged him to give it up in 1895—a period of 42 years. He also did missionary work at Statesville, where he built a church; and at Ronda, and Elkin, where churches have since been built, the fruits of his sowing. He went also into the vast fields in that part of the State then unoccupied by the church, ministering to the scattered members of Christ's flock wherever he found them. In addition to his ministerial duties, he was for twenty years Superintendent of Public Instruction of his county. He died in 1907 honored and beloved not only by his own fellow churchmen, but by men of every creed, and of none in that section of the State to which he had given his life.

The successor of Mr. Jacocks was the Rev. George Badger Wetmore, D.D. Dr. Wetmore was born in Newbern in 1821, graduated from the University of North Carolina with first distinction, being salutatorian of his class. For a while he practiced law in Fayetteville. He then studied for the ministry and was ordered Deacon in Christ Church, Raleigh, January 14, 1855, by Bishop Atkinson, and advanced to the priesthood by the same Bishop in St. Luke's, Salisbury, May 31, 1857. Immediately after his ordi-

nation to the diaconate, he was sent to Mocksville, and given charge of Christ, and St. Andrew's churches. Soon afterward, St. James Iredell was formed and came under his charge, and these churches he served faithfully, and most acceptably for the long period of thirty-two years. In 1857, Christ Church and St. Andrew's jointly built a rectory near Woodleaf to which Dr. Wetmore removed, and where he lived until 1887, when he removed to Banners Elk, Watauga County, and spent his remaining days ministering to the few scattered members of the church until his death, June 10, 1888.

Dr. Wetmore was a man of great learning, deep piety, and indefatigable industry. Few congregations have ever had a more faithful pastor. His large field extended from some miles east of St. Andrews, to the Charlotte and Taylorsville R. R., a field nearly thirty miles long, and more than half as broad, in which there were few families, no matter what their religious affiliations, that had not enjoyed the benediction of his visits. Most of you will recall his tall spare form, his crown of white hair, his large mobile mouth and his sweet smile as he stood in this pulpit preaching his excellent sermons, or ministering the sacraments to those he loved and who loved him. Faithful servant of God. May he rest in peace, and may light perpetual shine upon him.

Shortly after Dr. Wetmore took charge, Christ Church gave her second son to the ministry. July 27, 1856, in the Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill, Samuel Swann Barber was ordered Deacon by Bishop Atkinson. Mr. Barber was a son of "Uncle Tommie" Barber and a grandson of Johnathan, one of the original emigrants from Maryland. After his ordination he was sent to Pitt County, where he remained about six months, leaving to become assistant to Dr. Wetmore in his large field. Between them they served not only the churches in Rowan, but Mocksville, Farmington, Cooleemee, Lexington, Huntsville, and Statesville. About 1866 Mr. Barber removed to Hyde County, where he remained until his death a few years ago. "Uncle Barber," as he was familiarly called there, is most affectionately remembered over a large territory in the eastern part of the State. He was a "Perpetual Deacon," never taking priest's orders. He was thrice married, and two of his sons have entered the ministry. One of them is Rev. Henry Hobart Barber, Rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Augusta, Ga., and the other Rev. Milton A. Barber, the energetic, efficient and beloved Rector of Christ Church, Raleigh.

Shortly after Dr. Wetmore became Rector an event took place which is probably unique in the history of the church in North Carolina. In 1857 the Convention met in Salisbury, and the delegates and alternates from Christ Church were: Thomas Barber,

Thomas Barber, Jr., Jacob F. Barber, William Barber, Johnathan Barber, Matthew Barber, R. J. M. Barber, William E. Barber. I venture the assertion that this is the only time in the history of the Diocese when a whole delegation and its alternates bore the same name.

Another event of Dr. Wetmore's rectorate deserves special mention—the organization of the Sunday School. There may have been a Sunday School before this time, but if so, I have been unable to find any record of it. It is presumed that such instruction as the children received was given them at home, and through public catechising in the church. That it was efficient is abundantly proven by the history of the church. But during the latter years of Dr. Wetmore's stay a Sunday School was organized, superintended by Mr. Philip Nelson, who lived four or five miles from the church, but was most regular and faithful in his attendance, never permitting the weather to interfere. After he left the parish, the school was taken over by Mr. Joseph Barber, and for many years—until his death—he was the devoted and beloved leader in the religious training of the children. Since then the Sunday School has been maintained uninterruptedly by members of the congregation whose names you know.

After Dr. Wetmore's removal to Wautauga, the Rev. Edward P. Green, Deacon, was sent by the Bishop to serve the church. Mr. Green remained about three years, but his incumbency was not very successful. He had been raised a Baptist, but read himself into the church, and took orders. He was a man of considerable force, and an excellent preacher, but of an unfortunate temperament that antagonized his people and made it difficult for them to work with him. After leaving Christ Church, he served other points in the Diocese, meeting the same difficulties wherever he went, until finally he withdrew from the church and joined the Methodists. His stay with them was not very long, for he soon petitioned to be received again into the Church. After some hesitation this petition was granted, and he remained in the church until his death. Mr. Green had many fine qualities, and had it not been for his unfortunate temperament would probably have been a most useful and successful minister.

Shortly after Mr. Green's departure, this church gave her third son to the ministry. The writer of this sketch was prepared by Rev. Francis J. Murdoch, and was ordered Deacon by Bishop Lyman, in St. Luke's, Salibury, November 10, 1892, and advanced to the priesthood by Bishop Cheshire in the same church, May 31, 1896. He served in the churches of Rowan under Dr. Murdoch until December, 1897, when he became Rector of St. Stephen's, Oxford. During this incumbency the beautiful brown stone church

in Oxford was built. He became Rector of the Church of the Good Shepard, Rocky Mount, November, 1903, which post he held nearly thirteen years. He had the satisfaction of seeing this congregation grow from a small number to the sixth in size in the Diocese. The church building was enlarged and greatly beautified, and a new rectory built. A mission was also started at Spring Hope, a town twenty miles west of Rocky Mount, a small congregation gathered, and a church built and paid for. In September, 1916, he removed to Charlotte and became Rector of the Bishop Atkinson Memorial Church of the Holy Comforter, where he still is.

After Mr. Green's resignation, about 1890, Christ Church had no regular Rector for a number of years, but was under the care of Rev. Dr. Murdoch, and was served by young men who were being trained for the ministry by him. In 1894 the journals of the Convention give as ministers, Rev. F. J. Murdach, Rev. S. S. Bost, Rev R. B. Owens, and this continued until 1899, when Mr. Owens removed to Oxford, and Mr. Bost became Rector of St. Philips, Durham, where he still is. Under Mr. Bost, St. Philips has grown until it now reports the largest membership of any church in the Diocese. A beautiful stone church has been built by the congregation, also a memorial church of stone in West Durham and a wooden church in East Durham. Mr. Bost has done an unique work among the deaf mutes of Durham. Noticing that a large number lived there, and that they seemed to be neglected by all denominations, he took the trouble to learn the sign language, and began ministering to them in that language, with the result that more than seventy deaf mutes have been confirmed in his church. Two years ago his work for them was crowned by the ordination to the diaconate of Roma C. Fortune, a deaf mute, who had been prepared for his examinations by Mr. Bost, and who will now minister to the deaf mutes of the State.

After Mr. Bost left, Christ Church was served for three years by Rev. Thomas Lee Trott, another of Dr. Murdoch's "boys." Mr. Trott was afterward assistant to Mr. Bost in Durham, then Rector of St. Paul's Church, Monroe, and now in charge of St. Mary's, High Point, where he is doing an excellent work and is much beloved. While Mr. Bost and Mr. Trott are not sons of Christ Church, they may with justice be claimed as "grandsons" since they both came from St. Andrew's, which is a **daughter** of this church. The same may be said of the "Barbers," whose **father** was raised by this church, and of Rev. Preston Burke, of Reidsville, whose ancestors were trained in this church.

In 1902 the church was served by Rev. John Linker Saunders, with whose subsequent history I am not acquainted, except that he

is now in Washington, D. C. Then for two years (1903-4) Rev. Royal G. Shannonhouse had charge of Christ Church in connection with Statesville. Mr. Shannounhouse is now at Douglas, Ga. During his incumbency occurred the second ordination that has taken place in the church. On Sunday, August 7, 1904, Locke Winfield Blackwelder was presented by Dr. Murdoch, and ordered Deacon by Bishop Cheshire. Mr. Blackwelder preached here for a short while, and then took work at High Point, afterwards removing to Union, S. C., where he now is.

In 1906 another of Dr. Murdoch's "boys," Rev. Simeon J. M. Brown, perpetual Deacon, took charge of the church under Dr. Murdoch, and remained in charge until his death, which occurred in 1920. Mr. Brown was by birth and education a Lutheran, and came into the church late in life under the influence of Dr. Murdoch. He had always desired to become a minister, but the way did not open until after his confirmation. He was past middle age when he began his preparation, but so diligent and earnest was he that it gives me pleasure to say that though I have examined dozens of candidates for the ministry, he passed the best examination **on the English Bible** I have ever witnessed. His educational opportunities had been limited, but he made the best use of what he had, and was possessed of other qualities of mind and heart that made him exceedingly useful in the ministry. He was earnest, pious, and industrious, and was possessed of a humility that was beautiful to observe. During the latter years of his life he was afflicted with an incurable malady that greatly hindered him in his work, but in spite of it, he kept on, often going to appointments when he should have been in bed. "He was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and faith."

This brings us to Rev. Joseph C. D. Wilson, the present Rector, who comes to a church rich in historic memories and having a noble heritage of devotion and loyalty, handed down from ancestors of a by-gone day. May he be with the church for many years, and be as successful as some of his predecessors in winning souls to Christ, and inspiring them with energy and zeal in the cause of the Master.

DEC 82
N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA 46962